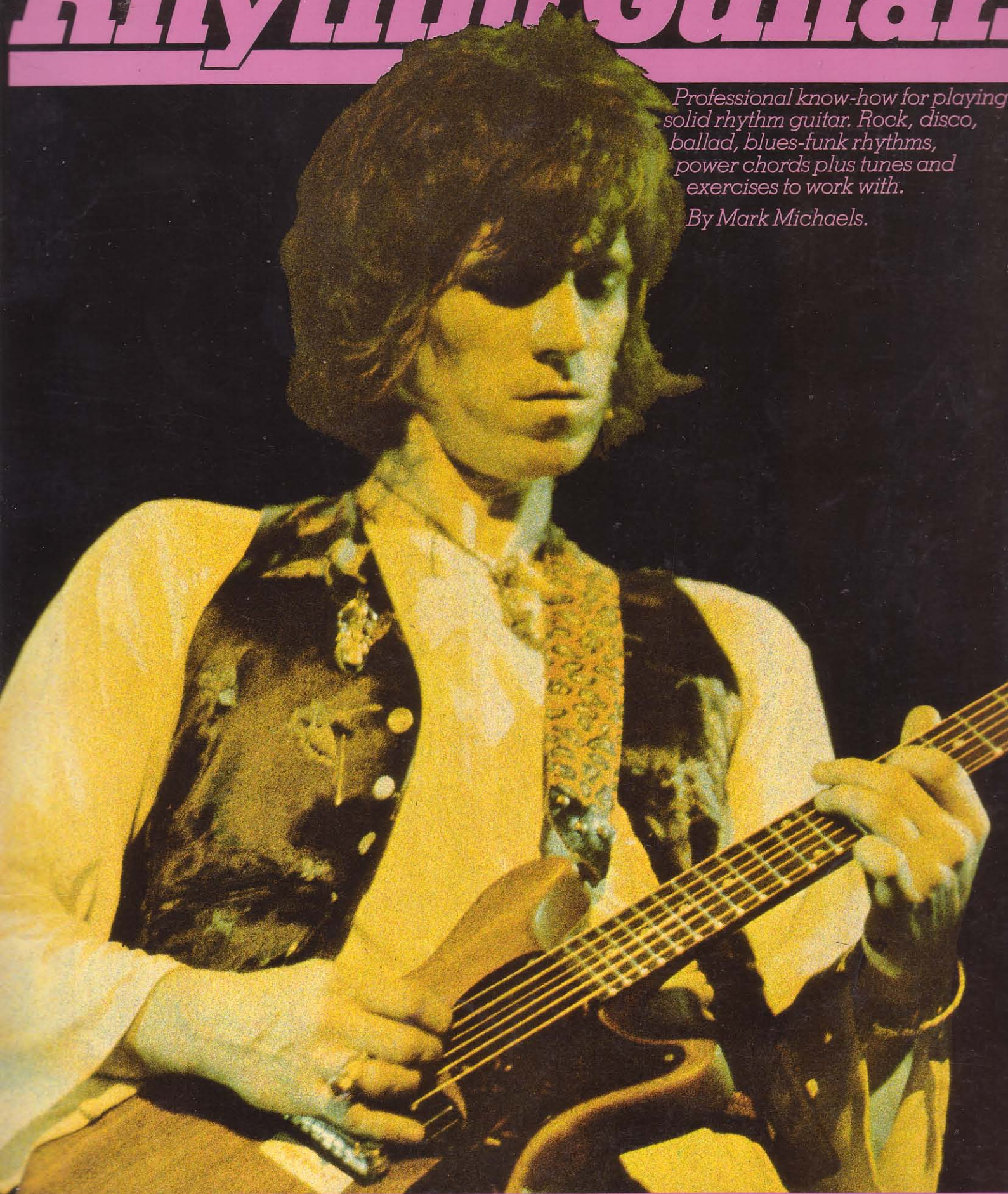


Teach Yourself **Rhythm Guitar**

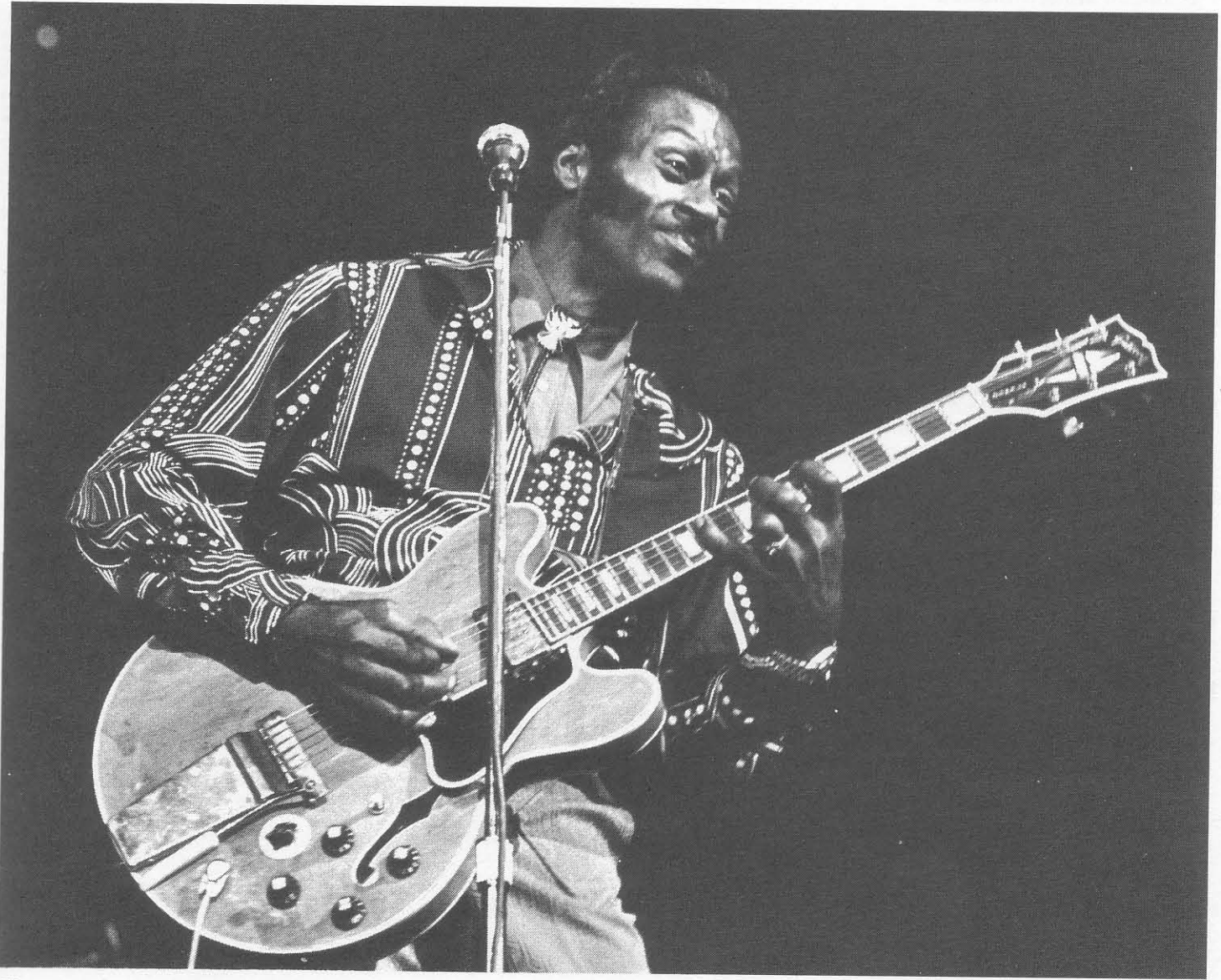
Professional know-how for playing solid rhythm guitar. Rock, disco, ballad, blues-funk rhythms, power chords plus tunes and exercises to work with.

By Mark Michaels.



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Chuck Berry

Foreword

John Lennon. Keith Richard. Steve Cropper. Peter Townshend. I'm sure you have all heard these names before, and probably, you have also heard the records each has made with such groups as the *Beatles*, *Rolling Stones*, *Booker T. and the MG's* and the *Who*. What makes these players so outstanding in the rock music field (aside from their varied abilities as singers and songwriters) is that they are all excellent and widely respected rhythm guitarists.

This is a book about playing rhythm guitar. If you know how to play some chords but really want to get good at it, then this book is for you. In its simplest form, rhythm guitar is playing chords in time to the music. However, the scope of rhythm guitar goes far beyond this. Creating interesting rhythmic patterns which complement the music is what rhythm guitar means in its highest form, and that's the goal we'll be aiming for in this book.

You don't have to know how to read music in order to benefit from this book, because all of the music is written in tablature as well as standard notation. However, reading is a tool which allows you to communicate with thousands of other musicians, and I strongly suggest that you familiarize yourself with standard musical notation.

The rhythm guitarist's function in rock music is to give the music drive, cohesiveness and color. He (or she) coordinates the rhythm and chord changes of a song while working along with the bassist and drummer to create a "sound" or "feel" or "groove." He does this by having at his disposal a variety of rhythm patterns and chords which he plays in his own unique style. There is no one way to play rhythm guitar—there are many. This book covers various methods and techniques with which you should be familiar in order to play rhythm by yourself, in a band, or as a sideman or backup musician.

One factor which is so important that it bears mention here as well as many times throughout this book is *time*. You might not fully understand what "time" means now, so let's just say that keeping time means playing steadily and evenly with the rest of the musicians. If you are playing a great part but it is out of time, it won't sound the way it should and will confuse the other musicians. On the other hand, if you are playing a fairly simple rhythm but are keeping the time well, you'll be giving the music a solid foundation against which an interesting groove can be developed. Rhythm players with a good sense of time are really in demand, so remember—keep your playing steady and even.

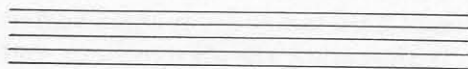
Learning to do something well takes practice and determination. *You* must supply the determination; I will help show you how to get the most out of your practice. You might think that the only really good guitarists are the ones who play those high, screeching leads, but understand that you can't begin to play a lead unless there is a solid rhythm behind it.

Let's begin now. Remember, watch your time, and keep in mind that there is no substitute for practice!

Rudiments of Music

Standard Music Notation

Music is written on the lines and in the spaces of a five-line system called a staff.



The lines and spaces of the staff do not represent specific notes until a particular clef is added. Music written for guitar uses the treble or G-clef. It looks like this and must be written on every line of music.



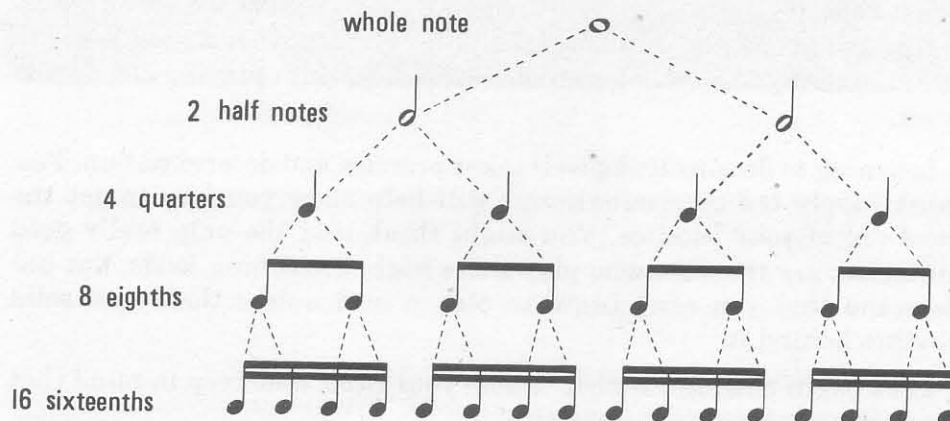
When the G-clef is placed on the staff, the notes on the lines and in the spaces are fixed as follows:



When notes go above or below the staff they are written on ledger lines:



A whole note (an empty circle with no line coming from it) receives four beats or counts. A half-note (an empty circle with a line coming from it) receives two beats, and a quarter note (a black circle with a line) gets one beat. The quarter note may be divided into smaller fractions. This chart will help explain the relationships between the notes and how they look.



The notes which we have learned already are by no means the only notes possible. Obviously, every note has a neighboring note which is higher than it is, as well as one which is lower. To express this concept in musical notation we need to introduce two new ideas: the sharp (#) and the flat (b).

The sharp symbol preceding a note raises that note by one half step or one fret. The flat symbol lowers a note by one half step or one fret. Now we can fill in the gaps in the series of notes we have learned. In this first example, all the new notes are indicated by sharps. In the second example the new notes are indicated by flats. As you look at these examples, find each note on the guitar. Just follow the indicated string (the 6th string is the fattest; the 1st string is the thinnest).

NOTES ON THE E(6th) STRING NOTES ON THE A STRING NOTES ON THE D STRING

Frets 0 1 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 3 4 5

NOTES ON THE G STRING NOTES ON THE B STRING NOTES ON THE E STRING

0 1 2 3 4 0 1 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 8 9 10 11 12
A A# B B# C C# D D# E

NOTES ON THE E(6th) STRING NOTES ON THE A STRING NOTES ON THE D STRING

0 0 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 2 3 4 5

NOTES ON THE G STRING NOTES ON THE B STRING NOTES ON THE E STRING

0 1 2 3 4 0 0 1 2 3 4 5 0 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 7 8 9 10 11 12
Bb B Cb C D D Eb E

Notice that whether notated in sharps or in flats, both series of notes are the same. With the exceptions of E to F and B to C, the sharp of a lower note equals the flat of its alphabetical upper neighbor. Notes which share this relationship, for example, A# and Bb or C# and Db, are called *enharmonic equivalents*.

Tablature

As I mentioned in the Foreword, all of the music in this book will be written in tablature as well as standard notation. Tablature is a way to write music using the spatial relationships of the strings on the guitar and the notes. In tablature, there are six lines, each representing a string on the guitar. Numbers are placed in the lines corresponding to the frets on which you place your fingers. Here is an example of tablature with some sample "notes" filled in.

Whole note Half note Quarter note Eighth note

Play: 5th fret, A string 7th fret, D string 8th fret, G string 10th fret, E string

A Word about $\frac{4}{4}$ Time

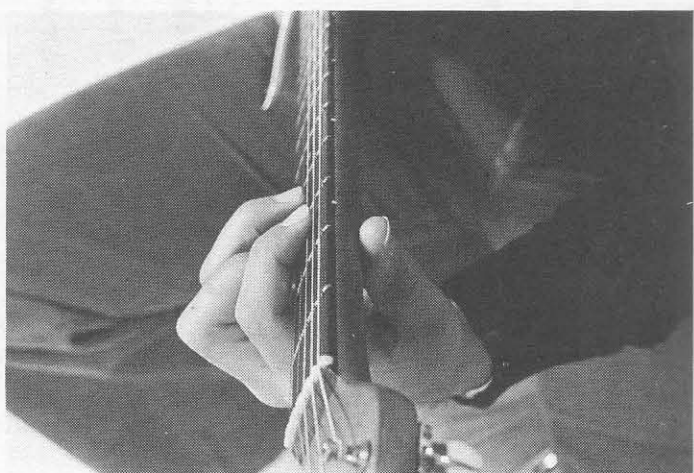
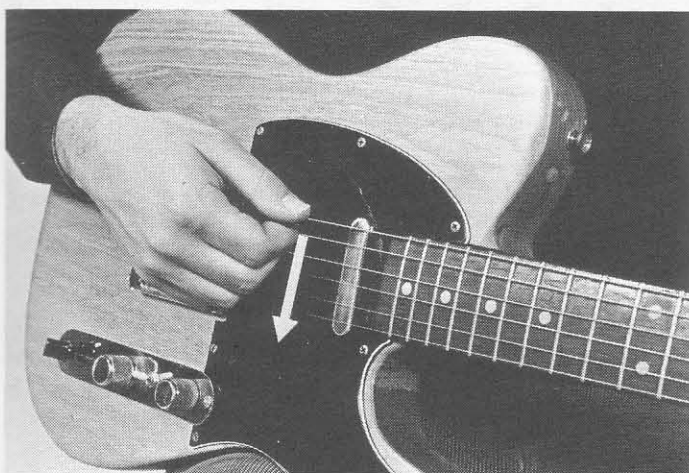
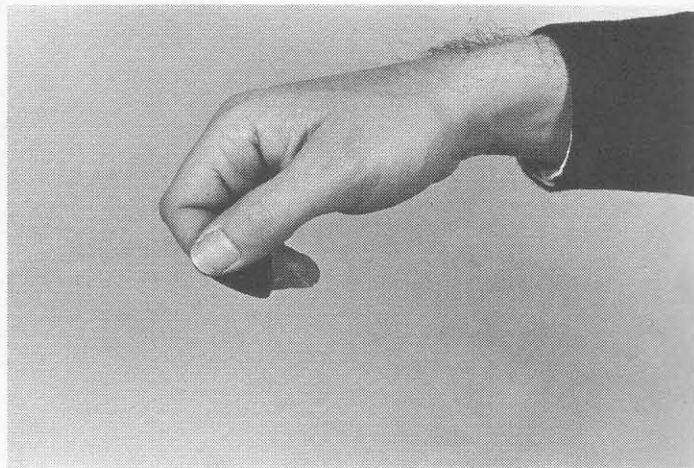
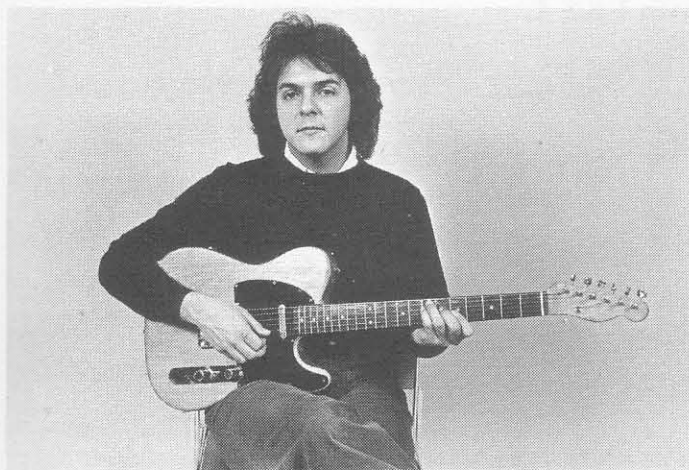
All of the rhythms and exercises in this book are written in $\frac{4}{4}$ or *common* time. The symbol for this is either $\frac{4}{4}$ or a "c" written on the staff, right after the clef (treble clef) symbol. What $\frac{4}{4}$ time means is that each bar or measure of music contains four quarter notes, each note receiving one beat. Therefore, each measure of music receives four beats. An eighth note gets one half beat. When you are counting out a measure which contains a combination of quarter and eighth notes, you should count "1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and" instead of just "1 2 3 4." This way of counting will make it easier for you to find out on which beat the written note is to be played. For example,

The first passage contains *even eighth notes*—eight eighth notes to the measure. The second contains a combination of quarter and eighth notes in the following pattern: quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, eighth, eighth. The number of beats which each of these notes receives is: one, one-half, one, one-half, one-half, one-half. Mostly all contemporary music is written in $\frac{4}{4}$ time. That is why we will be concerned with only $\frac{4}{4}$ time in this book.

When you practice, whether or not you are using a metronome, you should tap your foot in time along with the music. Tap four beats to the measure. This may sound silly, but it will really help your time.

How To Hold the Guitar

Before continuing, study the following pictures. They will show you how to hold the guitar, how to hold the pick, how to strum the guitar and how to hold your left hand.



Rhythms That Are Strummed

Basic Rhythms

Let's begin by playing some simple rhythms using full chords. Use a thin or medium pick and tap your foot in time to the music—four taps per measure, along with 1 2 3 4.

The first system of musical notation consists of a treble clef staff and a three-line tablature staff (T, A, B). The treble staff is in the key of E major (three sharps) and 4/4 time. It contains four measures of music, each with a single chord symbol above it: E, F#min, B7, and E. The tablature staff shows the fret positions for each chord: E (open strings), F#min (1, 2, 3, 4), B7 (2, 4, 2, 4), and E (open strings). The rhythm is a simple four-tap pattern (1 2 3 4) in each measure.

The second system of musical notation consists of a treble clef staff and a three-line tablature staff (T, A, B). The treble staff is in the key of E major (three sharps) and 4/4 time. It contains five measures of music, each with a single chord symbol above it: E, E7, A, B7, and E. The tablature staff shows the fret positions for each chord: E (open strings), E7 (4, 5, 2, 4), A (2, 3, 4, 5), B7 (2, 4, 2, 4), and E (open strings). The rhythm is a simple four-tap pattern (1 2 3 4) in each measure.

Here's the same progression in a slightly more complicated pattern. We are now using up- and downstrokes of the pick instead of just downstrokes, and there are eighth notes (count "1+2+3+4+") along with the quarter notes.

The third system of musical notation consists of a treble clef staff and a three-line tablature staff (T, A, B). The treble staff is in the key of E major (three sharps) and 4/4 time. It contains four measures of music, each with a single chord symbol above it: E, F#min, B7, and E. The tablature staff shows the fret positions for each chord: E (open strings), F#min (1, 2, 3, 4), B7 (2, 4, 2, 4), and E (open strings). The rhythm is a more complicated pattern using up- and downstrokes of the pick, with eighth notes (count "1+2+3+4+") along with the quarter notes.

The fourth system of musical notation consists of a treble clef staff and a three-line tablature staff (T, A, B). The treble staff is in the key of E major (three sharps) and 4/4 time. It contains five measures of music, each with a single chord symbol above it: A, B7, E, E7, and E. The tablature staff shows the fret positions for each chord: A (2, 3, 4, 5), B7 (2, 4, 2, 4), E (open strings), E7 (4, 5, 2, 4), and E (open strings). The rhythm is a more complicated pattern using up- and downstrokes of the pick, with eighth notes (count "1+2+3+4+") along with the quarter notes.

Remember not to play the low E string when you play the A and B⁷ chords. One way to accomplish this is to rest the palm of your right hand very lightly on the low E string in order to mute or damp it.

The exercise you have just practiced combines a few rhythm patterns. Try mixing them up and using your own chords to create a sound of your own. Then try this next series of chords. Try to make the chords sound as even and fluid as you can. Play slowly at first and then increase your speed.

Chords: A, F[#]min, B, E⁷

The two dots (:) at the end of the passage mean that you should go back to the beginning and repeat the whole thing. The next few rhythms introduce *rests*. When a rest appears in the music, you are to not play for the duration of the rest (thus the name "rest"). That is, if you see a quarter rest (⏏) you are to rest for one beat—count one beat before going on to the next chord or note. If you see an eighth rest (⏏), count one half beat without playing anything before you go on. This is the pattern for the next rhythm:

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +
play rest play rest

Chords: G, C, D⁷, G

When playing the D⁷ chord, you can mute the high E string by touching it lightly with the third (ring) finger of your right hand. Or, you can just not play the string at all, but this may take a little more control in your right-hand strumming technique than you may have at this point.

Here are some more rhythms using eighth-note patterns and rests. You should try practicing with a metronome and gradually increase your speed as you hear your playing becoming more fluid.

The image shows two staves of guitar music. The first staff is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It contains four measures: G (quarter), Emin (quarter), A7 (quarter), and D7 (quarter). Each measure has an eighth-note pattern: down, up, down, up, down, up, down, up. The second staff is in A major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It contains four measures: A (quarter), F#min (quarter), D (quarter), and E7 (quarter). Each measure has an eighth-note pattern: down, up, down, up, down, up, down, up. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 on the strings.

You may have realized by now that the up- and downstrokes of the pick always correspond to the rhythm of the music in the following way:

count	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+
pick	down	up	down	up	down	up	down	up

There is a relationship between the count, the stroke of the pick and the tapping of your foot. On the *downbeats* (1 2 3 4) you will always pick or strum down (▾) and you will bring your foot down. On the *upbeats* (the "ands" in between the numbers) you will always pick or strum up (▴) and you will raise your foot up.

Power Chords

Now you have a few basic rhythms down. We can begin to work with them in order to make your playing sound more like what you might hear on a record. Rock rhythm guitarists often play simple chords in a very aggressive way to get a really chunky, "fat" sound. Think of the rhythms you hear on some *Rolling Stones* records, like "Satisfaction" or "Tumbling Dice." The characteristics of this kind of playing are:

1. Attack
2. Sustain
3. Tone

Let's look at *attack*. If you hit the strings hard when playing (the symbol for this in musical notation is a > placed above the chord or note), the strings will vibrate longer and will *sustain* the sound longer than if you hit them less forcefully. This is true if you are playing on an acoustic as well as an electric instrument. Try the following rhythms using this concept. Strike all of the strings at once with one downward movement of the pick (we will temporarily deal with only downstrokes now, as it is more difficult to get a "hard" sound with upstrokes).

Play between the two pickups on an electric and right over the sound-hole if you are using an acoustic.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for guitar, each consisting of a treble clef staff and a three-string bass staff (labeled T, A, B). The first system is in the key of A major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It features a sequence of power chords: A, C, D, E, A, and A7. Each chord is marked with an accent (>) above it. The second system continues in the key of A major and 4/4 time, featuring power chords D, E, A, F#min, Bmin, and E. The F#min and Bmin chords are marked with an accent (>) above them. The notation includes fingerings for the bass strings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4) and a rhythmic pattern of 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +.

For some chords (like the F# minor and B minor) you are only playing three or four notes instead of full chords. These are known as *partial chords* and we will deal with them in detail a little later on.

The third characteristic of rock power chords is *tone*. If you have an acoustic, then there isn't much you can do to vary your tone except strike the strings closer to either the bridge or the fingerboard. Experiment. You will find that if you play nearer to the bridge, you will get a crisp, thin sound and if you play nearer the fingerboard you will get a fuller, more bassy sound. It's this "fat" sound that you should aim for.





On an electric, I would suggest adjusting your controls in the following way in order to get a powerful rhythm sound. Use the middle pickup position, which should activate both pickups (except on most Fender Stratocasters). Cut back slightly on your high end (turn down the treble on both pickups) and keep your volume all the way up. On your amp, set the volume on about 5, or wherever the sound starts to distort (sound fuzzy). Put your Bass on 3, Midrange on about 6 and Treble on about 8. Keep your Bright switch "Off" if your amp has one. If your amp has a Master Volume control, turn the amp (channel) volume all the way up to 10 and play with the Master Volume to see where it gives you the best distortion without being outrageously loud.

IMPORTANT! Any amp will distort if you turn all of the controls all the way up, but you will probably also blow it up, so *be careful!* Treat your amp gently and sensibly and it will work for you.

Try the following rhythms.

On the D chord you've just learned, mute the A string with your second finger.

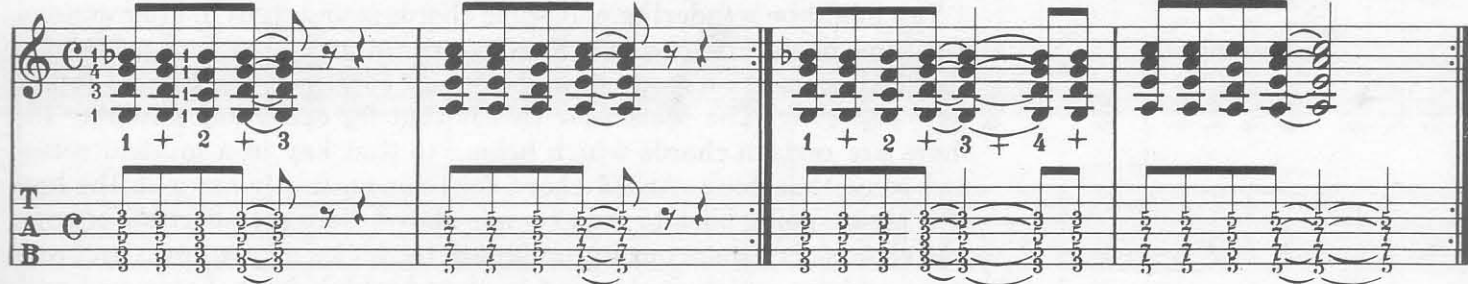
You should now work on trying to get an even chord sound while keeping the time steady. We are back to using up- and downstrokes, although for some rhythms, just downstrokes sound better. Experiment with both kinds of strumming and try to make your up- and downstrokes sound equal in terms of *attack*, *sustain* and *tone*. It is natural for the downstrokes to accentuate the bass strings and the upstrokes to accentuate the high strings so you must try to correct for this by striking all of the strings at once, evenly, so that all of the notes in the chord will sound at equal volume.

Gmin
or    

Amin

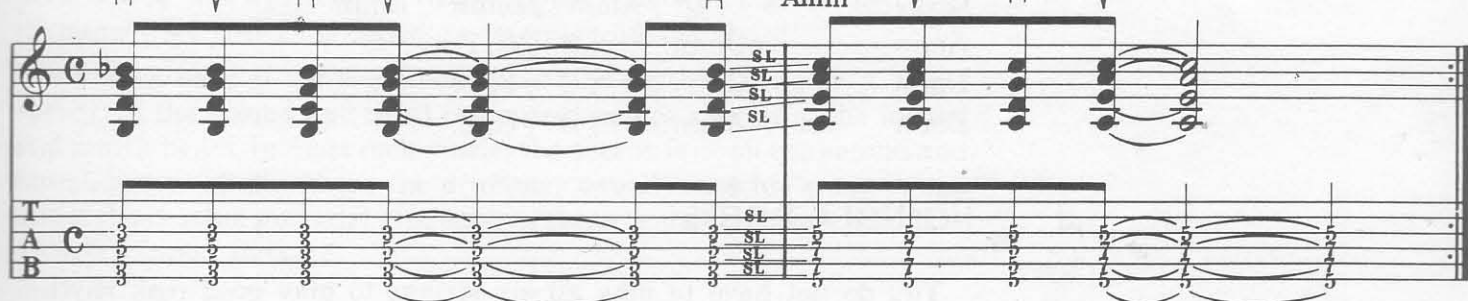
Gmin

Amin



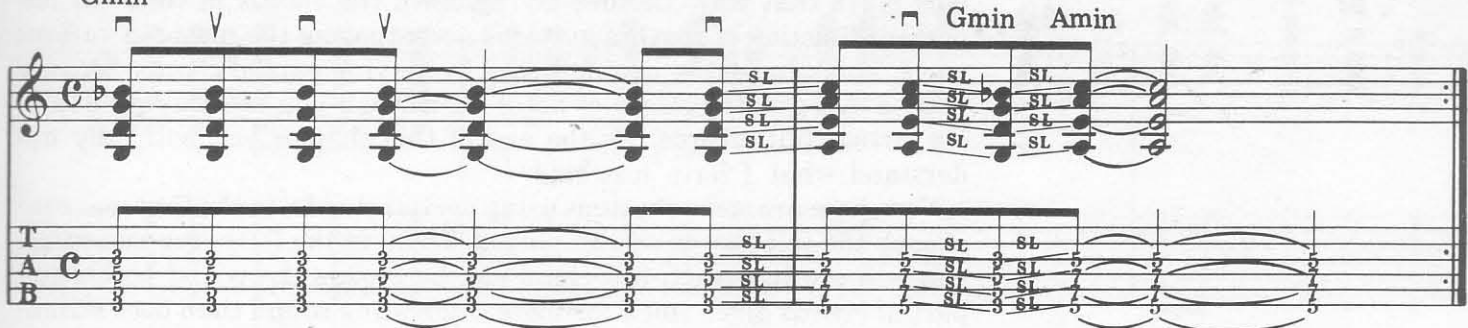
Listen to how this chordal riff sounds different when you use only downstrokes compared with when you use up- and downstrokes. In this next one, *slide* from the G minor to the A minor. When you slide, you won't have to strum again because the strings will still be vibrating. That is, the notes will sustain if you attack them vigorously; therefore the A minor chord will sustain based on the vibrations from the G minor.

Amin



Gmin

Gmin Amin



By studying the four examples above, you can see that we have developed an interesting rhythm. It's not magic—it just takes practice and familiarity with your instrument. Already you know quite a few rhythm patterns, strumming styles and chord changes, so try to create unique rhythms by experimenting. But first, read the next section in order to better understand how various rhythm patterns can be developed.

Chord Relationships

You might be wondering why some chords sound right in progressions and some don't. For example, if you start out a rhythm with a C Major chord, then go to an A minor and then an F# Major, the F# will sound "off" or wrong. The reason for this is that for every key you play in, there are certain chords which belong to that key in a musical sense and some that don't. An F# chord does not naturally occur in the key of C Major, going back to the example above. Here is a short list of keys and chords. Try them out in combinations. Make up your own progressions and see which ones sound good and which don't. Later on I will give you specific examples of some common rock progressions.

Key	Chords
A	D, E ⁽⁷⁾ , F# min ⁽⁷⁾ , C# min ⁽⁷⁾ , Bmin ⁽⁷⁾
C	F, G ⁽⁷⁾ , Dmin ⁽⁷⁾ , Emin ⁽⁷⁾ , Amin ⁽⁷⁾
D	G, A ⁽⁷⁾ , Emin ⁽⁷⁾ , F# min ⁽⁷⁾ , Bmin ⁽⁷⁾
E	A, B ⁽⁷⁾ , F# min ⁽⁷⁾ , G# min ⁽⁷⁾ , C# min ⁽⁷⁾
F	B, C ⁽⁷⁾ , Gmin ⁽⁷⁾ , Amin ⁽⁷⁾ , Dmin ⁽⁷⁾
G	C, D ⁽⁷⁾ , Amin ⁽⁷⁾ , Bmin ⁽⁷⁾ , Emin ⁽⁷⁾
Amin	Dmin., E ⁽⁷⁾ , G ⁽⁷⁾ , C, F
Dmin	Gmin., A ⁽⁷⁾ , C ⁽⁷⁾ , F, Bb
Emin	Amin., B ⁽⁷⁾ , D ⁽⁷⁾ , G, C

Partial Chords

You do not have to play all six strings to play good rock rhythm guitar. Actually, it is not really desirable to have a rhythm guitarist who plays that way. Besides laying down the chords in time, an important function of rhythm guitar is accentuating the music in various ways. This can best be accomplished by playing partial chords, because you have a greater choice of notes than when you are playing five or six string (full) chords. By the end of this chapter you will fully understand what I have just said.

Now, here are some rhythms using partial chords. In the first measure of each the full chords will be played. Then, in the following measures, you will see how each full chord can be broken down and how using partial chords gives you a far more interesting sound than does strumming across all six strings.

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a C major chord (C4, E4, G4) and a V (Vibrato) mark. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a C major chord (C2, E2, G2) and a C major chord (C3, E3, G3). The notation shows various partial chords and their breakdowns over several measures.

The musical score for "The Wind" by The Beatles is presented in two systems. The first system is marked with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a common time signature (C). The guitar part (G) is written on a single staff, featuring a series of chords and single notes, with a 'V' marking above the first measure. The bass part (B) is written on a single staff, featuring a series of chords and single notes, with a 'V' marking above the first measure. The second system continues the music, with the guitar part featuring a '4' marking above the first measure and the bass part featuring a '4' marking above the first measure. The score is written in a standard musical notation style, with notes, rests, and bar lines clearly visible.

In the first example above (the rhythm in C Major), we are breaking down the C Major chord and playing the notes that make it up, C, E and G in various combinations. You can play the notes C-E-G, C-G-E, G-E-C, G-C-E, E-C-G or E-G-C and no matter which combination you play, the resulting chord will be a C Major. Also, you can sometimes play just two of the notes in a chord (as in the second measure, where you are playing just C and G). A chord which contains the right notes (like G-C-E) but which doesn't start on the note which gives the chord its name (like C-G-E) is called an *inversion* of that chord.

Now look back at the second example (the rhythm using an A Major chord). In the second and third measures, we are accenting the second and fourth beats. In most rock music, the accent falls on the second and fourth beats. That's where the drummer usually hits his snare drum, and if the rhythm guitarist also accents these beats, the music will have an extra "sock" to it.

The musical score for 'The Wind' by The Beatles, featuring guitar and bass. The guitar part is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It includes various chords (III, G, V, VII, III) and articulations like accents and slurs. The bass part is written in bass clef with a common time signature (C) and includes fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and a sequence of notes (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +). The tablature for the bass is provided below the staff, showing fret numbers and string numbers.

In the above example (the G Major rhythm), the accent is on the upbeat—the “and” in between the second and third beats. This kind of accent is characteristic of music like Jamaican *reggae*. But generally, in modern rock music, the second and fourth beats of each measure are accented.

The Roman numeral above the staff is a symbol for the position in which you are supposed to play. This means that if you see a III above the staff, you should move your left hand up to the third fret so that your first finger can play the notes on that fret, your second finger can play the notes on the fourth fret, your third finger can cover the fifth fret and your fourth finger can play the notes on the sixth fret. Similarly, for the seventh (VII) position, your four fingers will, in order, cover the notes on the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth frets. Playing "in position" is very important because it allows you to cover many notes, from high to low, without jumping around all over the fingerboard. Roman numerals will be used to tell you which position to play in throughout the rest of the book.

If you look carefully at what you're playing in the preceding rhythm, you will notice that all you are really doing is playing a G Major chord in different inversions and positions. Yet you can hear quite a difference in sound between the rhythm in measure one and the rhythm in measure four. Here are some common rock progressions using various inversions of basic chords played in position.

First progression (Measures 1-4):

- Measure 1: Chord X (D major, 1st inversion), rhythm 1+2
- Measure 2: Chord V (D major, 3rd inversion), rhythm + 3+
- Measure 3: Chord VII Bmin (B minor, 1st inversion), rhythm 4+
- Measure 4: Chord G (G major, 1st inversion)

Second progression (Measures 5-8):

- Measure 5: Chord A7 (A7, 1st inversion), rhythm 1
- Measure 6: Chord D (D major, 1st inversion), rhythm 10
- Measure 7: Chord V (D major, 3rd inversion), rhythm 10
- Measure 8: Chord Dmaj7 (D major 7, 1st inversion), rhythm 10

Third progression (Measures 9-12):

- Measure 9: Chord VII D (D major, 1st inversion), rhythm 10
- Measure 10: Chord V (D major, 3rd inversion), rhythm 10
- Measure 11: Chord Bmin (B minor, 1st inversion), rhythm 10
- Measure 12: Chord II (D major, 2nd inversion), rhythm 10

Fourth progression (Measures 13-16):

- Measure 13: Chord VII Emin (E minor, 1st inversion), rhythm 10
- Measure 14: Chord Emin7 (E minor 7, 1st inversion), rhythm 10
- Measure 15: Chord A7 (A7, 1st inversion), rhythm 10
- Measure 16: Chord VA (A7, 3rd inversion), rhythm 10

Fifth progression (Measures 17-20):

- Measure 17: Chord D (D major, 1st inversion), rhythm 1+
- Measure 18: Chord III C (C major, 1st inversion), rhythm 2+
- Measure 19: Chord G (G major, 1st inversion), rhythm 3+
- Measure 20: Chord V D (D major, 3rd inversion), rhythm 4+

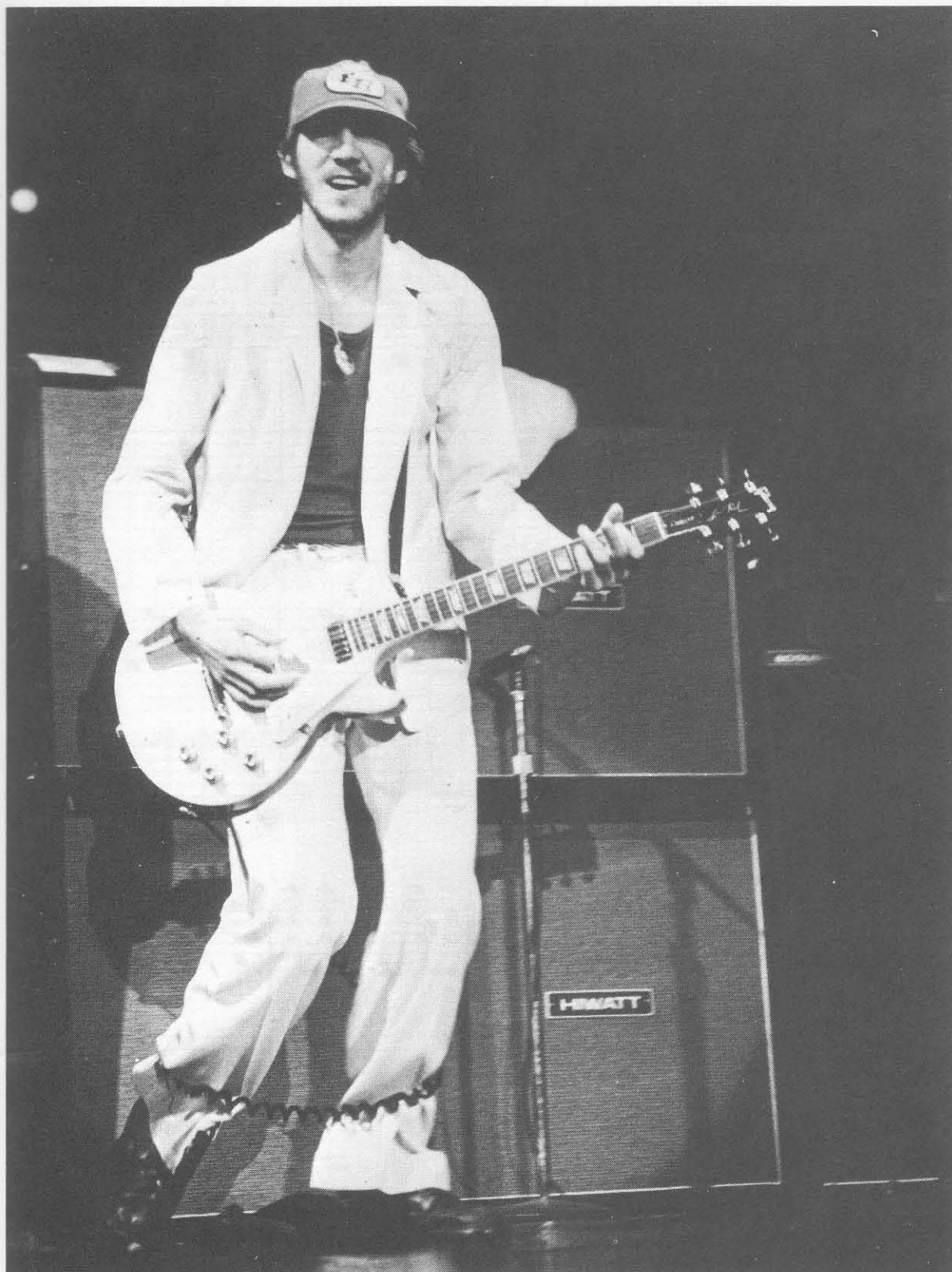
Sixth progression (Measures 21-24):

- Measure 21: Chord VII D (D major, 1st inversion), rhythm 1
- Measure 22: Chord V (D major, 3rd inversion), rhythm +
- Measure 23: Chord A (A major, 1st inversion), rhythm 2
- Measure 24: Chord III G (G major, 1st inversion), rhythm +

Seventh progression (Measures 25-28):

- Measure 25: Chord V A7 (A7, 3rd inversion), rhythm 1
- Measure 26: Chord A7 (A7, 1st inversion), rhythm 2
- Measure 27: Chord V A7 (A7, 3rd inversion), rhythm 3
- Measure 28: Chord A7 (A7, 1st inversion), rhythm 4

The first two examples use basically the same progression: D, Bmin, G, A⁷. In the second rhythm we are substituting an Emin⁽⁷⁾ for the G chord. The third progression goes D, C, G, D. This has been used a lot in rock tunes, such as in "Takin' Care of Business" by *Bachman-Turner Overdrive*. The last progression is also very common and can be heard in a similar form on B. W. Stevenson's hit "My Maria." Later on I will go into some more basic music theory so that you will understand how various progressions come about and how and when you can substitute certain chords for others within chord progressions.



Peter Townshend

Rhythms That Are Picked

Alternating Bass

Up until now we have been dealing with strumming the guitar to produce a rhythm pattern. It is also important to know how to pick notes in order to create a rhythm. The first kind of rhythm we will work on combines strumming *and* picking and is called the *alternating bass rhythm*. It's called this because in its simplest form, you first play a bass note, then a chord, then a bass note, then a chord and keep repeating this bass note-chord-bass note pattern.

The alternating bass rhythm comes from blues-folk and country music but is used much in rock music. It can be heard on many hit records, such as Rod Stewart's "Maggie Mae," Wings' "Band on the Run" and Peter Frampton's "Show Me The Way." Here are some basic rhythm patterns using the alternating bass. Remember, play them slowly at first and then increase your speed.

The image displays three musical examples of alternating bass rhythms, each consisting of a treble and bass staff. The bass staff shows the alternating bass pattern, while the treble staff shows the chordal accompaniment.

Example I: C Major
The treble staff shows a C major chord (C-E-G) and a C major scale run. The bass staff shows a C major chord (C-E-G) and a C major scale run. The rhythm is 4/4.

Example II: A Major
The treble staff shows an A major chord (A-C-E) and an A major scale run. The bass staff shows an A major chord (A-C-E) and an A major scale run. The rhythm is 4/4.

Example III: G Major
The treble staff shows a G major chord (G-B-D) and a G major scale run. The bass staff shows a G major chord (G-B-D) and a G major scale run. The rhythm is 4/4.

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system is for the vocal part, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a half note B-flat4. The second system is for the guitar accompaniment, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The guitar part begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a half note B-flat4. The guitar part is written in a style that suggests a specific fingering or technique, with many notes beamed together and some notes marked with 'x' or 'v'.

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system contains the first four measures of the piece. The second system contains the next four measures. The music is written for a treble clef instrument and a three-part vocal or instrumental ensemble (T, A, B). The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings, as well as chord symbols (G, C, D) and a 'I' marking above the first measure.

*The "Th" is an abbreviation for Thumb and refers to the thumb on your left hand. You should use your thumb whenever convenient to play notes on the two low strings. It *is* a finger, so why not use it?

Arpeggios

We will now cover a rhythm style in which you only pick the notes, as opposed to the alternating bass in which you picked and strummed and the power chords, which you strummed. If you take the notes which make up a chord and pick them out in a certain pattern, you will be playing an *arpeggio*. The rhythm that comes from this technique is known as an arpeggiated rhythm. Usually, you will start by playing the low (bass) notes first, then go up to the high notes and then work your way back down to the low notes. Here is an example of an arpeggio over a G Major bar chord played in the third (III) position.

There are two ways of playing an arpeggio. One, you can leave your fingers down throughout the whole thing as if you were getting ready to strum the full chord. This technique has the effect of letting the notes ring out (sustain) in an overlapping kind of way. At the end of an arpeggio played this way, you can actually hear the chord (even though you haven't strummed it!), since the notes which make it up have been played in order and are still sounding.

The second technique for playing an arpeggio is to pick up your finger after playing each note. Since a note won't sound after you take your finger off the string, this way of playing gives you a choppy sound than the first arpeggio technique does.

Here is another example of a G Major arpeggio. Each measure actually contains a different pattern but if you play the notes fluidly (using either technique mentioned above) and watch your time, the entire exercise will sound like one whole rhythm pattern, which can be repeated over and over again.

Now try this progression, played in arpeggiated style.

Arpeggiated progression in A major: A, F#min, D, E.

Arpeggios are often played with eighth-note triplets instead of regular eighth notes. A triplet is made up of three notes which receive the same number of beats or counts as two notes. In this case, since in $\frac{4}{4}$ time two eighth notes will receive one beat, an eighth-note triplet will also get one beat. Here's how eighth-note triplets look in musical notation.

Comparison of eighth-note triplets and eighth notes.

You can see that there are four eighth-note triplets (twelve notes altogether) in a measure, and that there is always a "3" written above the triplet, to help you identify it as such when it appears in a piece of music. You can also see that eighth-note triplets are counted "1 + a, 2 + a, 3 + a, 4 + a" instead of "1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + ." Here is a simple arpeggio played over the changes to a popular song, "End of the World." Remember, count "1 + a, 2 + a, etc.," because you are now playing eighth-note triplets. Go slowly at first until your rhythm sounds steady and even, then increase your speed up to a moderate tempo.

Arpeggio over the changes to "End of the World": D, A, F#(7), D.

Bmin 3 3 3 3 F#min 3 3 I Fmin

T
A
B

Emin 3 II A 3 Dmaj7 3 Bmin 3

T
A
B

III G Bmin 3 I Emin C II A7 3

T
A
B

A black and white photograph of a person's open palm, showing a circular, textured patch on the lower palm area, likely the thenar or wrist region.

Muted Bass Riffs

You can use the muting technique described above to pick a variety of rhythm riffs on the bass strings. Artists such as Chuck Berry and Steve Miller often play these bass rhythms along with a chorded rhythm or alone, to create an interesting rhythm feel. Play these rhythms and try varying the degree to which you mute the notes, from slightly choked to very muted, by changing the amount of pressure you put on the strings with your right-hand palm.

II E 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + A

MR MR MR MR MR MR etc.

T A C

B 0 2 4 2 2 4 0 0 2 4 2 2 2 4 0

MR MR MR MR MR MR etc.

B7 IV 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + E 1+2+

T A C

B 0 2 4 2 2 4 7 7 6 4 4 6 7 7 4 4 5 5 6 7 7 7

Notice that in the previous exercise, the chords do not change at the beginning of each measure. Instead, they change on the last eighth note of each measure—the “and” in between beats four and one of the next measure. This is quite common in rock songs and is known as anticipating the chord or changing on the upbeat. In the next rhythm, the chords change on beat one of every measure (as usual).

A 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + D 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + E(7) 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

MR MR MR MR MR etc.

T A C

B 0 2 4 2 2 4 0 0 2 4 2 2 2 4 0

MR MR MR MR MR etc.

T A C

B 0 2 4 2 2 4 0 0 2 4 2 2 2 4 0

Rhythm Review

At this point I would like to suggest a review of what you've learned in the first part of the book. Before you reach the next few chapters, which cover very important and slightly more advanced rhythm concepts, you should be able to play (and play *in time*!) everything we've talked about so far. Here is a good way to review all of the material which has been presented.

1. Pick a chord progression from the first part of the book. Turn on your metronome and record the progression on a cassette tape recorder. Record the same progression a few times so you won't have to keep rewinding the tape in order to hear the rhythm over and over.
2. Play back what you've recorded and
 - a. Play partial chords in various positions and inversions against the recorded rhythm.
 - b. Play alternating bass rhythms along with the tape.
 - c. Play arpeggios over the chords.
 - d. Play muted arpeggios and muted bass riffs against what you've recorded.
 - e. Play various rhythms along with the tape; see which ones sound good and which don't.

Then do the same thing with different progressions, either those I've written out or those which you've made up yourself. Practice and practice and soon, you will notice a difference in your playing; it will get better!

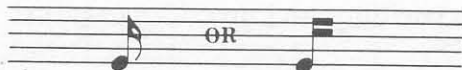
Rhythm Patterns

Dotted Eighth and Sixteenth Notes

The music in this chapter will be a little more advanced than that in the earlier part of the book. We will be playing dotted eighth notes and sixteenth notes. A dotted eighth-note looks like this:



A dot after a note increases its value or duration by one half. In this case, the G note would get one half a beat plus one quarter beat or three quarters of a beat ($\frac{1}{2}$ beat + $\frac{1}{4}$ beat = $\frac{3}{4}$ beat). A sixteenth note looks like this:



A measure made up entirely of sixteenth notes looks like this:



When counting sixteenth notes, count "1 a + a, 2 a + a, 3 a + a, 4 a + a" (sixteen counts). You now see that a dotted eighth note equals three sixteenth notes: $\frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{16}$ or $\frac{2}{16} + \frac{1}{16} = \frac{3}{16}$. Therefore you would count a dotted eighth-note "1 a + ." Here is a sample measure including both dotted eighth notes (which can also be written as a tied eighth and sixteenth note) and sixteenth notes.



Here are some rhythm patterns which both sound good and will give you practice in reading. They are all written in the key of C Major; some of the progressions may sound familiar to you as they have been used in many popular rock songs.



The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The top system features a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a 4/3 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff, with chords indicated by Roman numerals: VIII C, II G \flat , III G, I F, and III G. The bottom system features a bass clef and a common time signature (C). The bass line is written on a single staff, with chords indicated by Roman numerals: T C, A C, and B C. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests, as well as dynamic markings like 'SL' (Sforzando) and 'F' (Fortissimo).

(Hard Rock)

VIII C 2 a + a VIB IF B \flat F B \flat

T
A
B

III G 1 + (2) + (3) + 4 a + a

T
A
B

IF III C

T
A
B

T
A
B

I C 1 a + a 2 a + a 3 a + a 4 a + a III G C G C

T
A
B

I F B III G C I C F III G G6

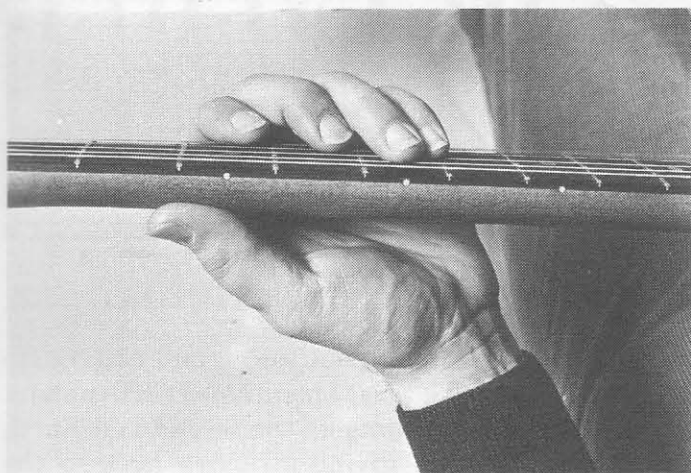
T
A
B

Slap-Damping

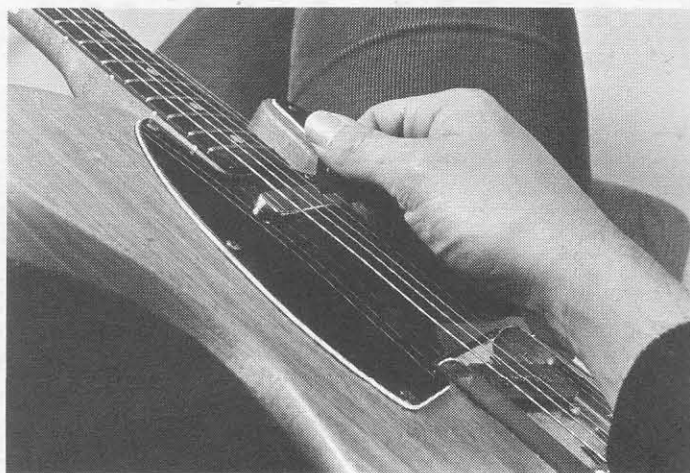
After having played over these rhythms a few times (remember, slowly at first), you might think that they sound a little choppy in the parts where you are resting and not playing. There is a technique for keeping the rhythm flowing throughout the rests and I call it "*slap-damping*." It is really muting the strings and strumming the muted strings. Here is how you do it.

1. Slightly lift your *left* hand off the notes you are fingering, so that your fingers are still on the strings but are not pressing them all the way down to the fingerboard.
2. Strum as usual with your *right* hand, but at the same time that you come down with your hand, mute the strings with the flesh of your right palm. This highly coordinated movement will take quite a bit of practice to really get down. Don't be discouraged. Once you accomplish this technique, your rhythm playing will sound as good as that of the finest guitarists around.

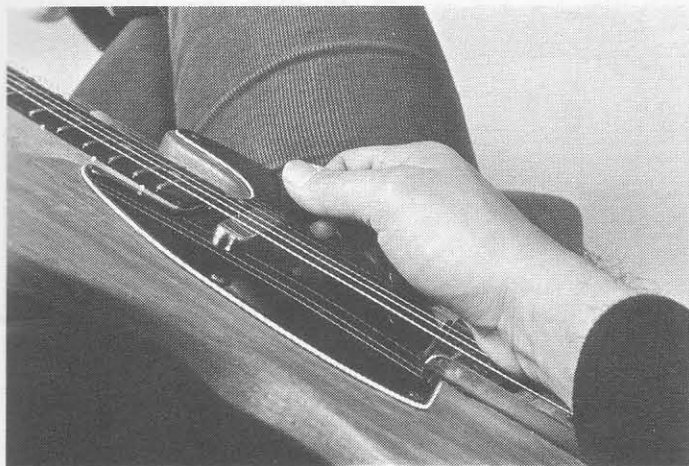
These photographs illustrate both the left and right-hand positions in slap-damping.



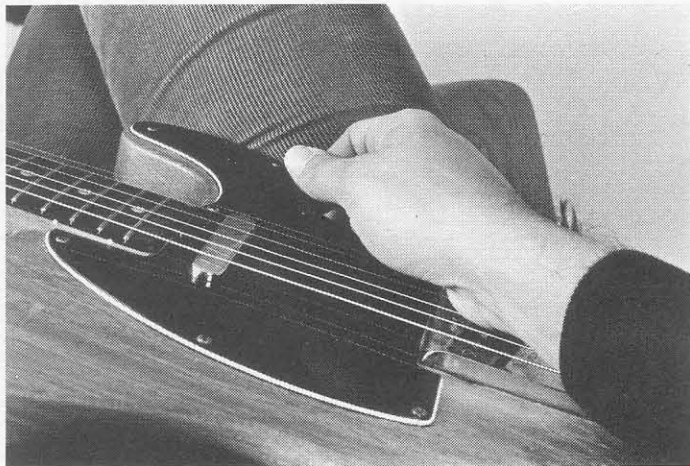
Left Hand: Fingers lightly touching the strings.



Right Hand: Just before you strum.



Right Hand: Upon contact with the strings.



Right Hand: After strum.
Note: Right palm is still touching the strings.

Now try this technique, first with quarter-note rhythms, then with eighth-note patterns. It's a good idea to go back over the few rhythms I just gave you and play them with the slap-damping technique. But first, study these examples. I will use an "S" written below the staff to symbolize the slap-damping strum of a chord.

This musical example shows a four-measure progression in C major. The guitar part (top staff) features quarter-note chords: C (measure 1), V (measure 2), Dmin (measure 3), and G7 (measure 4). The bass part (bottom staff) plays a simple eighth-note pattern. Slap-damping is indicated by 'S' marks below the guitar staff on the second and fourth beats of each measure.

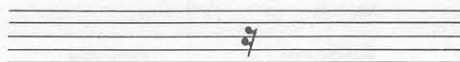
This musical example shows a four-measure progression in C major. The guitar part (top staff) features eighth-note chords: C (measure 1), V (measure 2), F (measure 3), and G7 (measure 4). The bass part (bottom staff) plays a simple eighth-note pattern. Slap-damping is indicated by 'S' marks below the guitar staff on the second and fourth beats of each measure.

Notice that you are usually slap-damping on the second and fourth beats of each measure. This goes back to what I mentioned earlier about the primary accents in popular music coming on the second and fourth beats. By slapping the guitar, you are giving an extra push to the rhythm section and are thereby adding tightness and drive to the music. Accenting the second and fourth beats will also help your timing because it gives you an anchor into the playing of the drummer and bassist.

This musical example shows a four-measure progression in C major. The guitar part (top staff) features eighth-note chords: C (measure 1), V (measure 2), Emin (measure 3), and V (measure 4). The bass part (bottom staff) plays a simple eighth-note pattern. Slap-damping is indicated by 'S' marks below the guitar staff on the second and fourth beats of each measure.

The Sixteenth Rest

This next rhythm introduces the sixteenth rest. It looks like this:



When a sixteenth rest appears in the music, rest for one sixteenth count or one quarter beat. This rest has the same duration as a sixteenth note, one quarter of a beat, when the music is written in $\frac{4}{4}$ or common time. Try these rhythms which incorporate sixteenth rests into what you have been doing.

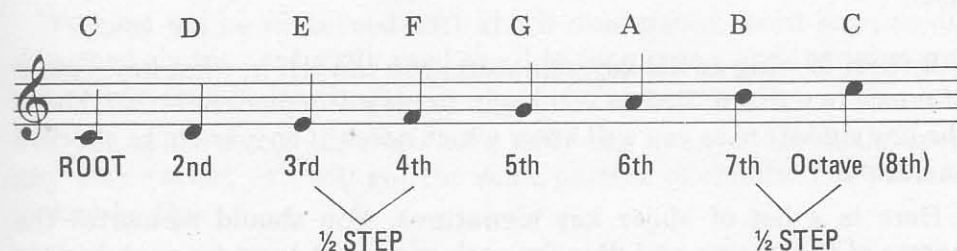
The image shows a page from a musical score for 'The Song of the Lark' by Gustav Mahler. The score is written for voice and piano. The vocal parts are labeled C, VI Bb, VIII, I F, F/E F III G, VI, T A C B. The piano accompaniment is labeled T A C B. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The vocal parts are written on staves with a treble clef. The piano accompaniment is written on staves with a bass clef. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The vocal parts are written on staves with a treble clef. The piano accompaniment is written on staves with a bass clef.

Transposing Chord Progressions

The rhythms I have just given you can be played in any key, not just in C Major. Changing music from one key to another is known as *transposition*. In order to transpose, you first have to know a little about music theory. The following few pages are very important for the complete understanding of the rest of the book. Read them slowly and try to relate what is said to what you know already about rhythm guitar.

The Major Scale

A major scale is a series of eight notes arranged in a pattern of whole steps and half steps. This is the series of notes known as the *C Major scale*.



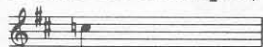
You see that between E and F and between B and C there is one half step. A whole step is equal to two frets on the guitar and a half step is equal to one fret. Except for E to F and B to C, there is a whole step between all the other notes. The distance from one note to another is called an *interval*. The intervals in the C Major scale are as follows:

Scale Tone	(Note)	Interval
Root	C	
2nd	D	Whole Step
3rd	E	Whole Step
4th	F	Half Step
5th	G	Whole Step
6th	A	Whole Step
7th	B	Whole Step
Octave—8th	C	Half Step

This interval pattern holds true for every major scale. With the above information you can construct any major scale! Start first with the name of the scale and therefore the first note in the scale. Then go up to the next interval (a whole step) and write down the name of the note there. Proceed in this manner, remembering that between the third and fourth and seventh and eighth there is a half step, until you reach the octave (eighth note). Here is an example of this technique, using the D Major scale.



Key Signature

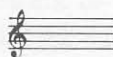



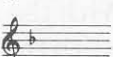

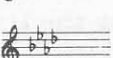
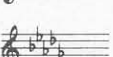
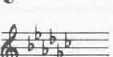
In order to keep the same interval pattern of whole and half steps that we used in the C Major scale, the F and C notes have to be *sharped*, or raised one half step each, giving us an F# and C# in the D Major scale. Therefore, the *key signature* for D Major is "two sharps." When a piece of music is written in a particular key, as all music is, the key signature tells you which notes have to be either sharpened (#) or flattened (b) in order to maintain the proper scale-interval relationship for the notes in that key. If we want to "cancel" a sharp or flat at any point in the music, a *natural* sign (♮) is used. For example, if we were playing in the key of D Major, this note 

would be played as a C natural, not a C sharp. The natural sign applies only in the measure in which it is used. It must be notated again in later measures if we want to cancel another *accidental* (a sharp or a flat).

By first looking at the key signature, you can tell in what key a piece of music is written. Before you begin to play any piece of music, check the key signature so you will know which notes, if any, are to be sharpened or flattened!

Here is a list of Major key signatures. You should memorize the names of the sharps and flats for each key, or at least for each key we have covered so far in this book.

Major Key Signatures

C		No sharps or flats
G		One sharp F#
D		Two sharps F# - C#
A		Three sharps F# - C# - G#
E		Four sharps F# - C# - G# - D#
B		Five Sharps F# - C# - G# - D# - A#
F#		Six sharps F# - C# - G# - D# - A# - E#
F		One flat Bb
Bb		Two flats Bb - Eb
Eb		Three flats Bb - Eb - Ab
Ab		Four flats Bb - Eb - Ab - Db
Db		Five flats Bb - Eb - Ab - Db - Gb
Gb		Six flats Bb - Eb - Ab - Db - Gb - Cb

Diatonic Chords

Chords within a given key are called *diatonic chords*. Major and minor chords are composed of three notes, and the three-note chords are called *triads*. The numerical relationship between the notes of these triads is 1-3-5. For example, to build a C Major chord, we start on C (1), add the third note in the C Major scale, E, and then the fifth, G. Therefore the notes in a C Major chord are C, E and G.

If we now build chords starting on each note of the C Major scale, here is what we get:



I - C major . II - D minor . III - E minor . IV - F major . V - G major . VI - A minor . VII - B diminished .

We need not be concerned with the B diminished chord now, as diminished chords are hardly used at all in rock music and therefore are not emphasized in this book.

If you construct triads containing only the notes of the scale upon any major scale, you will get the same pattern of chords. The pattern looks like this:

Major	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Scale	Major	minor	minor	Major	Major	minor	diminished
Chords							

Here is the importance of this formula: Knowing the notes of any major scale allows you to construct the basic chords in that key!

Try building the chords of some keys I have already used in this book, such as G, F, A, D and E. See what you come up with; play them; see if they sound "right" or "wrong." Remember, the II, III and VI chords are always *minor* and the I, IV and V chords are always *Major*, when you are working within major keys.

Chord Progression

As I mentioned earlier, some chords seem to "go together" more naturally than others. This section will help you to understand the reasons why this is so. The basic chord in any key is the "key chord" itself, called the *tonic* or the *I chord*. The next most important chord in a key is the chord which is built on the fifth step of the key; this V chord is called the *dominant* and usually leads back to the I chord (the tonic). This V-I progression is the basis for most music in the Western world. Very often the V chord has a fourth note added to it, this note being the fourth note in the major scale. For example, in the key of C Major, the V chord is a G; adding an F note to the G makes it a G⁷ (the V⁷ chord). The third most important chord in a key is called the *sub-dominant* or the IV chord. Together with the tonic and the dominant, the sub-dominant rounds out the three basic chords in any key. Thousands of songs have been written using only these three chords.

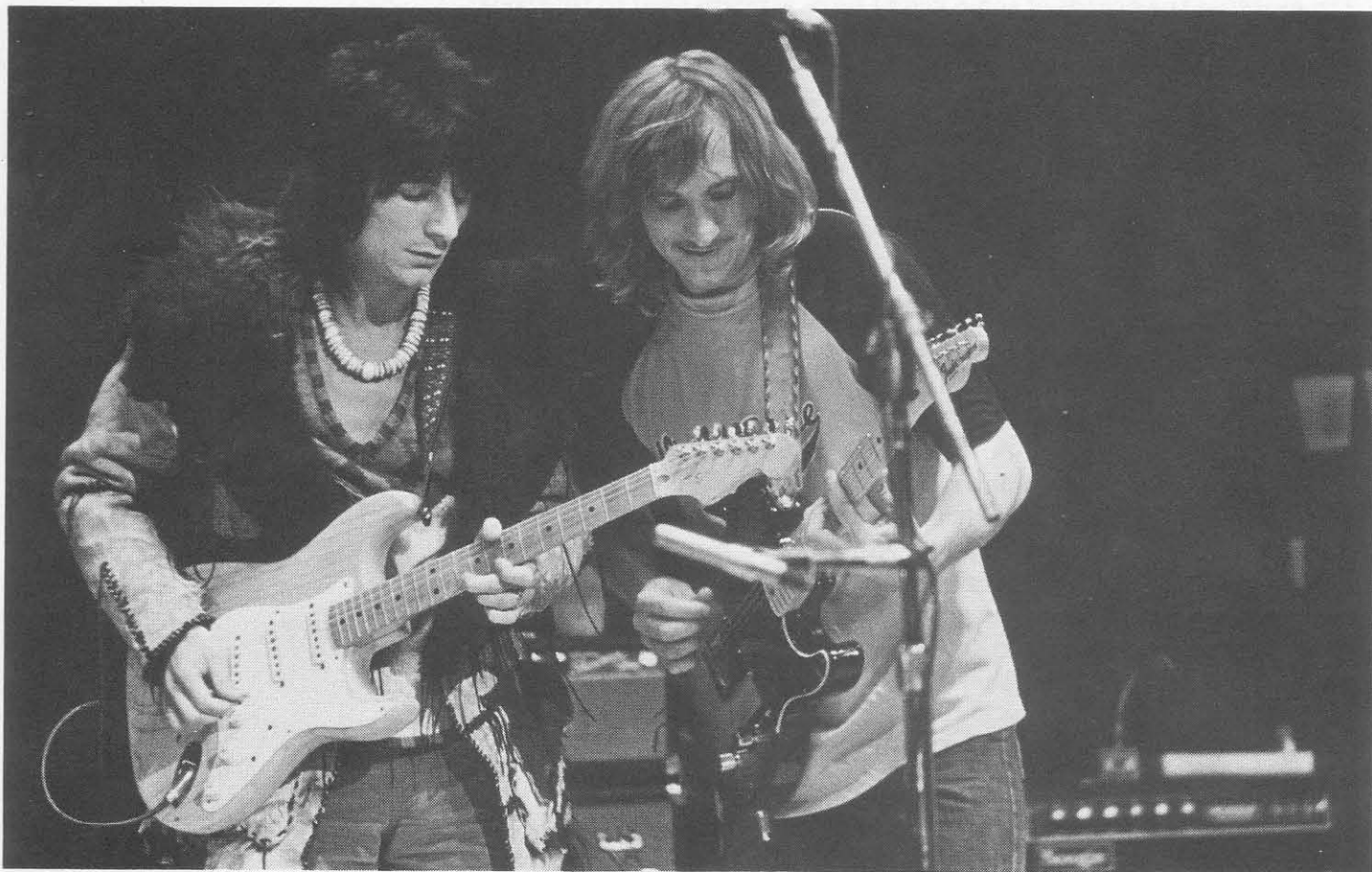
Transposing

Now that you know about scales and keys and diatonic chords, transposing becomes a very simple matter. Let's look at the following chord progression, in the key of G Major.



Notice that the progression begins on the I chord (G), goes to the III (minor), E minor, then to the II (minor), A minor. Then it goes to an F Major, which is *out of the key of G Major*, and then to the V⁷ chord (D⁷). If we want to transpose this progression to the key of E Major, the first chord would be an E (the I chord), then a C# minor (III), then an F# minor (II), then a D Major, and finally a B⁷ (the V⁷ chord). Since the relationship between the G and F chords in the original progression is *down a whole step*, we use this same relationship in finding that in the key of E Major, the chord corresponding to the F Major in the first progression is a D Major—one whole step down from E.

In general, when transposing from one key to another, find out what chord intervals are used in the original progression and then apply this formula to the new series of chords. If you are writing out the music, remember to notate the proper key signature.



Rolling Stone Ron Wood with Joe Walsh of the Eagles

Basic Chord Progressions

Now that you know how to transpose from one key to another, we will go over some basic progressions; once you have mastered these in the given key, you should transpose and play them in other keys.

I- IV- V⁷ Starts on the I chord of the key (the tonic), goes to the fourth and then to the fifth. For example, G-C-D⁷.

I- II- V⁷ Again, starts on the tonic, moves to the II chord (which is a minor chord) and then to the fifth. For example, A-Bmin-E⁷.

I-VI-II-V⁷ Tonic, sixth (minor), second (minor) and fifth, such as C-Amin-Dmin-G⁷.

You can see that the first and second progressions are almost the same. In general, you can substitute a II chord for a IV chord (and vice-versa) in most progressions. For example, E-A-B⁷ becomes E-F[#] min-B when an F[#] min chord is substituted for the A chord. Here are examples of these various progressions, and some more in addition. Remember, the Roman numerals above the staff refer to positions, not chords.

I-IV-V⁷

The quarter-note triplet at the end of this rhythm is played in two beats: three quarter notes written as a triplet, or two quarter notes.

V⁷-IV-I

III G 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + V

I-II-V⁷

The G¹³ chord is a substitution for G⁷.

III C Cmaj7 V C6 C Dmin Dmin (addE) III G¹³

I-II-IV-V⁷

The B⁹ chord is a substitution for B⁷.

IX E F#min7 B⁹

XIII A B⁹ B⁹

I-VI-II-V⁷

D 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + VI B^bmin VII Bmin

Chords: D, VI B^bmin, VII Bmin, Emin7, A9, A7

Emin7 A9 A7

Chords: Emin7, A9, A7

VI-IV-V

V C^{sus}4 C III B^b^{sus}4 B^b V Dmin

Chords: V C^{sus}4, C, III B^b^{sus}4 B^b, V Dmin

VI-II-V

The A minor ⁷ and D⁷ in the last measure of the rhythm are passing chords to bring you from B^b back to G minor.

III Gmin V Cmin I F F^{sus}4 F⁷ B^b Amin⁷ D⁷

Chords: III Gmin, V, Cmin, I F, F^{sus}4 F⁷, B^b, Amin⁷ D⁷

Playing Rhythm Guitar

If you have really learned the material presented in the preceding pages, you now have enough technical knowledge, theoretical understanding and facility in playing rhythm styles to be able to play rhythm guitar with other musicians. But what if you get together with a drummer, bassist and horn player and they say, "OK, let's do "Get Back" (by the *Beatles*) in G?" What do you do? How do you begin? This chapter will focus on the practical aspects of *doing it* . . . playing rhythm guitar.

Some Points to Consider

When I play rhythm guitar, I try to make what I am playing

1. Interesting and pleasing to the ear, so it sounds good.
2. Relevant to the song, so it sounds right.
3. In touch with the other musicians' playing, so we sound together.
4. Steady and even with respect to the time of the music, so everything sounds tight.

You may be wondering, "What is an 'interesting' rhythm?" or "How can I play 'in touch' with the other players?" Well, there are quite a few musical variables which can be altered to accomplish these ends. You can play either full or partial chords in various positions and inversions, use upstrokes or downstrokes and combinations of both, play louder or softer, vary your tone from bass to treble (and vary your tone within a song), play in a fluid or choppy style, use various rhythm techniques (like playing arpeggios or muted bass riffs), use substitution chords, and play eighth-note, sixteenth-note or triplet patterns. It is your job as a rhythm guitarist to call upon all of your knowledge and *experiment* in order to create the rhythm which sounds best for a particular tune.

Creating the Rhythm

Let's look at "Get Back", in G Major. You, the bassist and drummer are all ready to go, plugged in, tuned up, and the drummer counts off "1-2-3-4." Right away you know the *tempo* (speed) the song will be played at, the time signature ($\frac{4}{4}$ or common time), and you know the key (G Major). At this point I will assume that you know the changes to the song. Since "Get Back" is a rock song on the "hard" side, try to get a powerful rhythm sound (see the earlier chapter on Power Chords). First try a quarter-note pattern; this one is a rhythm riff built around the basic changes to the song, G-C-G.

III G (C) G (C) G (C) G (C) V C Csus4 C III G (C) G (C)

Well, it sounds OK but not really *right*; therefore your group probably won't sound together—like a band—if you play this rhythm. There is nothing actually bad about this rhythm; the idea or germ for an interesting rhythm is there, but it doesn't quite make it yet—it needs work. What's missing? What's wrong? First, you might notice that this rhythm has no "bottom" to it. Let's try something in a lower octave, on the bass strings.

What a difference! Now we've got the basic sound down. But there doesn't seem to be any energy or drive or life to the rhythm. Let's double up on the rhythm, using eighth notes instead of quarter notes, and see how that sounds.

Look at how much progress has been made by just changing two variables: the tonality of the chord and the rhythm pattern. Now let's change two more: use only downstrokes instead of alternating picking and slap-damp the second and fourth beats of each measure. Also, play the C chord in the eighth position (it's easier to downstroke it there).

Once again, playing great rhythm guitar is not magic! You can see that by *systematic experimentation* you can create interesting, solid rhythms.

Now obviously I can't take you through the changes and rhythms to every rock song you might encounter. What you have learned from the preceding example ("Get Back") is that getting the "right" rhythm for a song has a lot to do with experimentation. The more you play, and play with others, the more valuable experience you will gain. The more experience you have, the less you will have to experiment in order to get a good rhythm part; you will intuitively know what will sound good and what won't.

Jamming: Varying Your Rhythm Playing Within a Progression

Sometimes you will get together with other musicians and instead of playing a complete song, you will just “jam” over a series of changes. This kind of playing is lots of fun and can be very instructive, since you can pick up rhythms and riffs from the other players from listening to what they are doing. On the other hand, some jams can get very boring if everyone keeps playing the same thing over and over again.

As a rhythm guitarist, you can change your playing subtly to vary the sound even if the bassist and drummer are repetitious in their playing. Of course, if the other players change what they are playing to complement your variations, you will be free to experiment even more. Let's look at a I-IV-V⁷ progression in the key of G major—a very basic pattern with which you are already familiar.

If you were jamming on the above progression, your first rhythm might be a medium-rock feel based on a syncopated eighth-note pattern, as follows.

III G C

C IV D9

Now look at the first variation below. Play it.

III G V VII Emin7

VIII Cmaj7 X D7

You have varied your rhythm pattern slightly (notice the use of sixteenth notes on the last beat of measures 1 and 2) but still managed to keep the same feel. Also, an $E^{\text{min}7}$ has been substituted for a G chord in the second measure as well as a $C^{\text{maj}7}$ for a C and a D^7 for the D^9 . In the following example, the further variations include playing a bass riff against the changes, using partial chords in various positions and switching from up and downstrokes to only downstrokes in the last two measures.

The first variation (measures 1-4) shows a treble staff with chords G, $E^{\text{min}7}$, and D, and a bass staff with a rhythmic pattern. The second variation (measures 5-8) shows a treble staff with chords A^{min} and D, and a bass staff with a rhythmic pattern. The notation includes fingerings, slurs, and dynamic markings.

The next variation is really just a 4 measure bass riff but I am introducing left hand muting in it. This technique is symbolized by an ML written directly under the note to be muted. To mute a string with your left hand, don't press the string all the way down to the fingerboard. Let your finger rest on the string to be muted and press down *slightly*, just enough so that you get some tone. If you don't press down on the string at all, the sound will be too dead and you won't be able to hear the pitch of the note. Practice this variation slowly at first until you get the muting technique down and then increase your speed.

The next variation (measures 1-4) shows a treble staff with chords G, E^{min} , and D, and a bass staff with a rhythmic pattern. The notation includes fingerings, slurs, and dynamic markings.

C IV D

Let's get back to playing chords. Here's a funky rhythm over the same changes (G-C-D⁹). Try using your own inversions; vary the rhythms by yourself but remember to keep your playing steady and even.

G Emin

VII V V V V

Cmaj7 D7

Here's a chordal riff using 3 different rhythm patterns. Measures 1 and 3 use an even eighth note pattern played with downstrokes only. Measure 2 uses a funky rhythm and measure 4 combines a funky rhythm (on the A^{min}) with a sixteenth note triplet pattern (on the D⁷). A sixteenth note triplet = 2 sixteenth notes or 1 eighth note in duration. Again, practice slowly at first and watch your time.

III G

Emin

VIII C

Amin

D7

X

T
A
B

V

X

3

3

3

The last example in this section is a very melodic rhythm. You are really playing a melody within the chords. This is done by using various substitution chords and inversions. The rhythm itself is quite simple but it may take you some practice to be able to change from one chord to the next without breaking time, so don't let those eighth notes fool you. This is a difficult rhythm pattern. Notice the following substitutions.

G—G^{maj7}—G^{maj6}
 E^{min}—E^{min7}—E^{min9}
 A^{min}—A^{min7}—A^{min9}—F^{maj7}
 D⁷—A^{min7}(C^{maj6})—D⁷⁺⁵

The image displays two musical staves for guitar, showing chord progressions in G major. The first staff includes the following chords and fingerings:

- III G:** Treble clef, G4, B4, D5. Bass clef, G2, B1, D2. Fingering: T (3), A (3), B (3).
- II Gmaj7:** Treble clef, G4, B4, D5. Bass clef, G2, B1, D2. Fingering: T (3), A (3), B (3).
- III G6:** Treble clef, G4, B4, D5. Bass clef, G2, B1, D2. Fingering: T (3), A (3), B (3).
- G:** Treble clef, G4, B4, D5. Bass clef, G2, B1, D2. Fingering: T (3), A (3), B (3).
- V Emin9:** Treble clef, G4, B4, D5. Bass clef, G2, B1, D2. Fingering: T (3), A (3), B (3).
- Emin7:** Treble clef, G4, B4, D5. Bass clef, G2, B1, D2. Fingering: T (3), A (3), B (3).

The second staff includes the following chords and fingerings:

- Amin9:** Treble clef, G4, B4, D5. Bass clef, G2, B1, D2. Fingering: T (3), A (3), B (3).
- Amin7:** Treble clef, G4, B4, D5. Bass clef, G2, B1, D2. Fingering: T (3), A (3), B (3).
- Fmaj7:** Treble clef, G4, B4, D5. Bass clef, G2, B1, D2. Fingering: T (3), A (3), B (3).
- D7:** Treble clef, G4, B4, D5. Bass clef, G2, B1, D2. Fingering: T (3), A (3), B (3).
- VII Cmaj7 (Amin7):** Treble clef, G4, B4, D5. Bass clef, G2, B1, D2. Fingering: T (3), A (3), B (3).
- X D7+5:** Treble clef, G4, B4, D5. Bass clef, G2, B1, D2. Fingering: T (3), A (3), B (3).

When jamming, you can also modulate from one key to another, using the same progression. Refer to the chapter on Transposing if you don't remember how to go from one key to another.

In the next chapter I will give you some ideas for rhythm patterns you can play for various kinds of tunes. Five categories will be covered: Rock and Roll, Hard Rock, Light Rock—Rock Ballad, Rhythm and Blues-Funk, and Disco. These categories are by no means mutually exclusive. For example, you might go to a "disco" feel in the bridge or middle of a rocker to lend variety to your rhythm sound. You should try mixing up the following rhythm patterns, remembering that your ear is the final judge of which rhythm makes it and which does not.

Rock and Roll

First system of musical notation. Treble clef, key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The system includes a guitar staff with a capo on the 2nd fret and a bass staff. The guitar staff has a 3/4 time signature. The bass staff has a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes chords and individual notes, with some notes marked "MR".

Second system of musical notation. Treble clef, key signature of three sharps. The system includes a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar staff has a 3/4 time signature. The bass staff has a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes chords and individual notes, with some notes marked "MR".

Third system of musical notation. Treble clef, key signature of three sharps. The system includes a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar staff has a 3/4 time signature. The bass staff has a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes chords and individual notes, with some notes marked "MR".

Fourth system of musical notation. Treble clef, key signature of three sharps. The system includes a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar staff has a 3/4 time signature. The bass staff has a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes chords and individual notes, with some notes marked "MR".

Fifth system of musical notation. Treble clef, key signature of three sharps. The system includes a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar staff has a 3/4 time signature. The bass staff has a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes chords and individual notes, with some notes marked "MR".

Hard Rock

Now think of songs by artists such as the *Rolling Stones*, Rod Stewart, Peter Frampton, *Bad Company*, *Fleetwood Mac*, the *Who*, etc. Use power chord settings on your guitar and amp when practicing these rhythms.

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). It contains a sequence of power chords: II A, followed by a series of eighth notes with eighth rests, and then F#min. The bottom staff is a three-part guitar tablature with lines labeled T, A, and B. It shows the fretting for the chords and the rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and eighth rests.

The second system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It contains a sequence of power chords: IV C#min, III Cmin II Bmin, and III G. The bottom staff is a three-part guitar tablature with lines labeled T, A, and B, showing the fretting for the chords and the rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and eighth rests.

The third system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It contains a sequence of power chords: VII E, followed by a series of eighth notes with eighth rests, and then E7sus4. The bottom staff is a three-part guitar tablature with lines labeled T, A, and B, showing the fretting for the chords and the rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and eighth rests.

C 2 a + a VIB \flat I F F $\text{sus}4$ F F $\text{sus}4$

VIII

C V VI B \flat I F F $\text{sus}4$ F III G7

VIII

Light Rock—Rock Ballad

The characteristic rhythm in songs by the *Eagles*, Paul Simon, Carole King, Linda Ronstadt and others is an eighth-note feel, usually with the second and fourth beats of every measure slap-damped. Tunes with heavier country influence in this large pop field usually incorporate an alternating bass rhythm. These rhythms are fairly simple but very solid. Try copying the rhythm guitar parts off of the record to some popular songs.

The image displays four systems of guitar notation, each consisting of a treble staff and a bass staff. The notation includes various chords, rhythms, and articulations characteristic of light rock and rock ballad styles.

- System 1:** Treble staff starts with a C major chord (VII E) and an eighth-note triplet. Bass staff features a C major chord (C) and a steady eighth-note bass line. Chords include E major 7 (Emaj7) and A major (A).
- System 2:** Treble staff starts with an F# minor chord (II F#min) and a half note. Bass staff features a half note. Chords include B major (B) and E major (E).
- System 3:** Treble staff starts with a C major chord (VIII C) and an eighth-note triplet. Bass staff features a C major chord (C) and a steady eighth-note bass line. Chords include E major (E) and A major (A).
- System 4:** Treble staff starts with a G major chord (III G) and an eighth-note triplet. Bass staff features a G major chord (G) and a steady eighth-note bass line. Chords include E major (E) and A major (A).

V Dmin G7 Dmin G7

1 2 3 4 1

T A B

s s s s

C F C VIII G7

1 2 3 8 10 8 10

T A B

s s s s

Rhythm and Blues—Funk

Songs by *Sam and Dave*, *Otis Redding*, *Booker T. and the MG's*, *Stuff*, the *Isley Brothers*, *Marvin Gaye*, *Earth, Wind and Fire*, and the *Average White Band* provide good illustrations of this next category. The rhythms for R & B material are usually highly syncopated mixtures of eighth and sixteenth notes. The first one here combines a few different rhythm patterns. A lot of "funk" rhythms are built around riffs, as in the second example below. Try making up your own rhythm riffs to popular songs you already know.

Example 1: Dmaj7 2 a + a 3 a + a 4 + Amin7 2 a + a 3 a + a

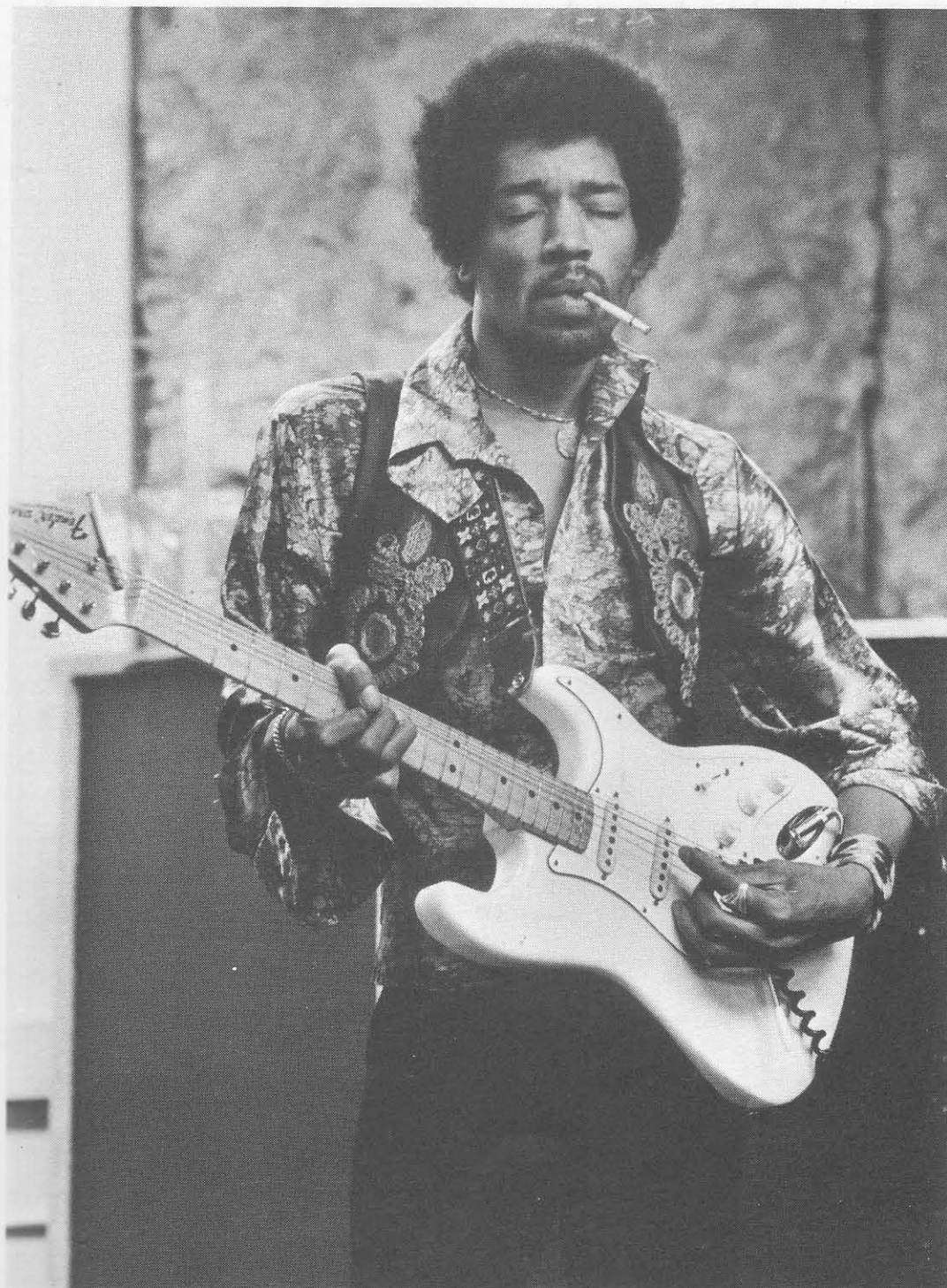
Example 2: III Gmaj7 * Th C9 1 a + a 2 a + a 3 a + a 4 III C#9 a + a

Example 3: III G V

*Mute the A string with your thumb when playing this version of G Major 7.

V Amin 4 III D7 2 a + a 3 + 4 a + a

T A B 5 7 5 5 7 5 5 7 5 5 7 5



Jimi Hendrix

Disco

Disco rhythms are almost all sixteenth note patterns played in a very repetitive style. Here is your "basic disco" rhythm, as made popular by a very big recording star.

The image displays four systems of musical notation for a disco rhythm, each consisting of a treble staff and a guitar TAB staff. The rhythm is a repetitive sixteenth-note pattern.

- System 1:** Treble staff shows a series of chords marked with 'V' and 'F'. The TAB staff shows the corresponding fretting pattern. The key signature has one flat (Bb).
- System 2:** Treble staff shows a series of chords marked with 'V' and 'Fmaj7'. The TAB staff shows the corresponding fretting pattern.
- System 3:** Treble staff shows a series of chords marked with 'V' and 'Fmaj6'. The TAB staff shows the corresponding fretting pattern.
- System 4:** Treble staff shows a series of chords marked with 'V' and 'VI F7'. The TAB staff shows the corresponding fretting pattern.

Each system is divided into two measures by a vertical line. The TAB staff for each system shows the fretting pattern for the chords, with 's' indicating a string.

VIII C7
 1 a + a 2 a + a 3 a + a 4 a + a

Discography

Rather than give you a list of specific records, I'll mention a few artists whose playing you should get to know. I'd like you to familiarize yourself with lots of different rhythm styles and sounds in order to open up your ears to all of the things that can be done by a rhythm guitarist. When listening to a particular song, try to hear the chord changes (without playing along). Listen to how the rhythm section creates a certain feel and note what accents and inversions the rhythm guitarist is playing to complement the melody of the song.

John Lennon

The greatest rhythm guitarist in modern rock music. A master of tone, time and taste. Listen to any (every) *Beatles* record.

George Harrison

What he does with partial chords—accents, bass riffs, arpeggios—is second only to his own leads with the *Beatles*.

Brian Jones and Keith Richard

Listen to their interplay and contrasting sounds on many early *Rolling Stones* records. My favorite albums are *Out of Our Heads* and *Between the Buttons*.

Chuck Berry

Basic Rock and Roll rhythms. An early master of the art form. Check out his *Greatest Hits* album.

Jerry Reed

Listen to his rhythm style. Reed's syncopations against what are really just simple country-blues chord progressions are amazing.

Peter Townshend, Jeff Beck, Jimi Hendrix

The power chord players to listen to. Especially listen to Townshend on early *Who* cuts such as "I Can See For Miles," "Pictures of Lily," "Call Me Lightning," and others. My favorite Hendrix album is *Axis: Bold As Love* and ditto for Beck's *Truth*.

Rod Stewart's

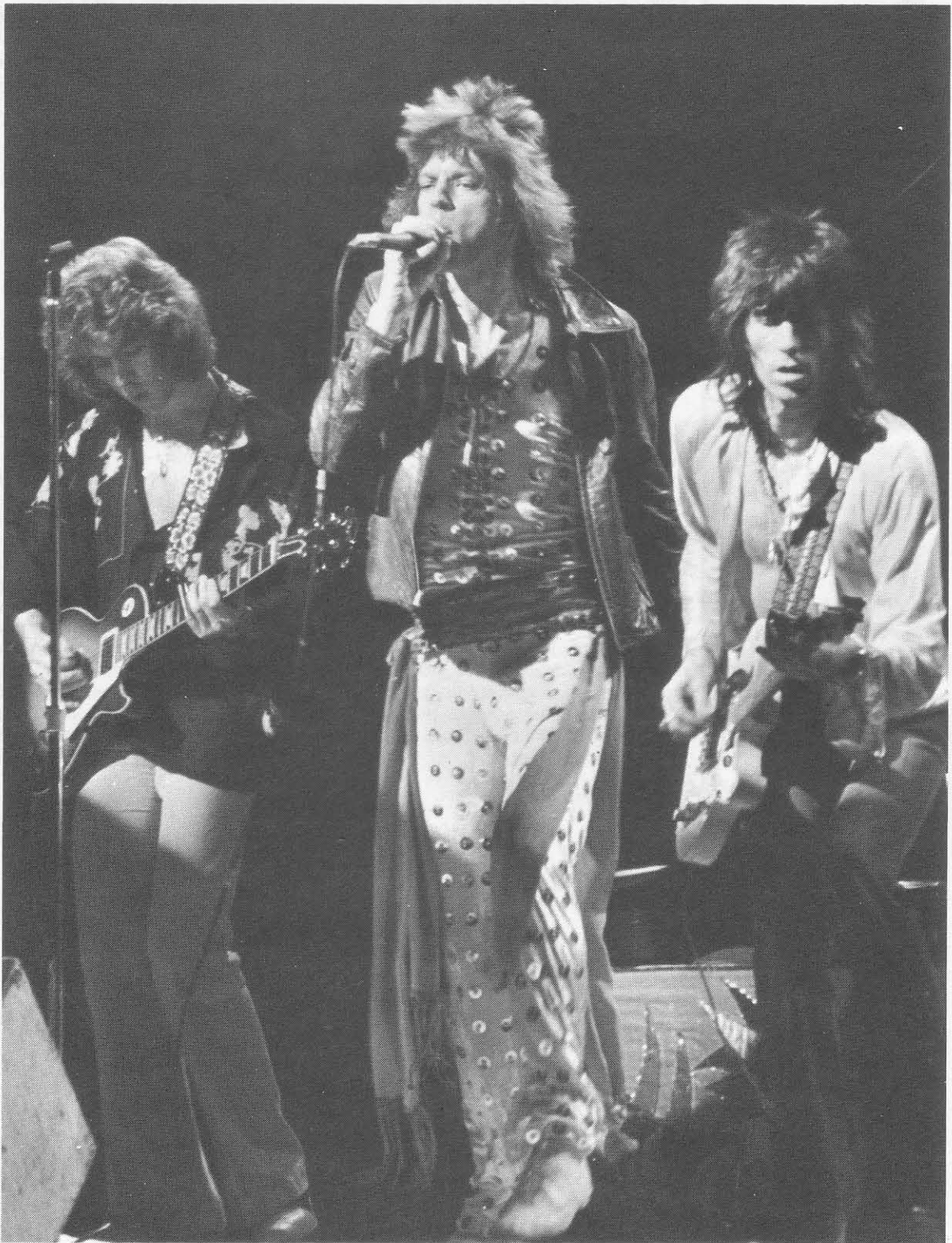
solo albums (*Gasoline Alley*, *Every Picture Tells A Story*, *Never A Dull Moment*, *A Night on the Town*, etc.) feature many fabulous rhythm guitar players, from country-acoustic (Martin Quittenton) to hard rock (Ron Wood).

Steve Cropper and Cornell Dupree

practically invented R & B rhythm guitar. Listen to Cropper with *Booker T. and the MG's* and as a sideman with Otis Redding, among others; hear Cornell Dupree with his own N. Y. band, *Stuff*, as well as on many Aretha Franklin cuts. Both players define taste in rhythm playing.

Also check out: *Earth, Wind and Fire*, *Average White Band*, early Stax-Volt recordings on Atlantic (*Sam and Dave*, Otis, etc.), early Motown such as the *Supremes*, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye (from the 1960s) and some rather good current artists, such as Peter Frampton, Steve Miller, and *Fleetwood Mac*.

Practice, play, listen, practice some more, keep good time, have a good time, and Good Luck!



Rolling Stones Mick Taylor, Mick Jagger and Keith Richard